2 Polit. Pamphl. vol 149.

A LETTER FROM A *MANCHESTER* MANUFACTURER TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE *Charles James Fox*, &c.

A
LETTER
FROM A
MANCHESTER MANUFACTURER
TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
Charles James Fox,
ON HIS
POLITICAL OPPOSITION
TO THE
COMMERCIAL TREATY
with FRANCE.

PRINTED AT MANCHESTER:
And Sold by J. STOCKDALE, Piccadilly, LONDON.

M. DCC. LXXXVII.

A

LETTER

FROM A

MANCHESTER MANUFACTURER

TO

ON HIS

POLITICAL OPPOSITION

TO THE

COMMERCIAL TREATY

with FRANCE.

SIR,

I FEEL little hesitation in addressing a Letter to you upon a subject of the highest importance to the manufacturers of Lancashire; especially when I call to mind the permission you have allowed us, of writing to you freely upon our commercial concerns.

Your

Your late parliamentary language on the Treaty with France has ſpread an alarm through every trading town in this quarter: for we little expected, after your promiſes of conſtant attention to our manufacturing intereſts, that you would have oppoſed a meaſure which we had previouſly adviſed, from a thorough conviction of its beneficial conſequences to this nation; far leſs did we apprehend that you would have raiſed objections from an affected regard

for

for the *political, rather than the commercial conſequence of the empire*, by unſeaſonably reviving national jealouſies, that ought never to be mentioned, if the advantages of trade have the leaſt weight with you.

Under this impreſſion, I cannot help telling you how little your Lancaſhire friends (whoſe very exiſtence depends on the extenſive ſale of their goods) expected to be ſneeringly told, *that their*

their ſpeculations are their own concerns.

Theſe ſpeculations, however lightly you may treat them, have cleared our warehouſes of goods, which had lain long on hand for want of markets. In the ultimate ſucceſs of theſe ſpeculations, allow me to aſſure you, we have ſtill a conſiderable intereſt.

But have we merited this diſregard, not to ſay diſdain, from you,

you, Sir, who once made popularity with us an object of your cloſeſt purſuit?

The Iriſh Propoſitions, we conceived, had a tendency injurious to our trade; you oppoſed them, and gained the thanks of a grateful people. But the preſent Treaty is replete with advantages to us and to the nation at large. — You cannot be uninformed of theſe circumſtances; — yet you have derided our judgments, and

oppoſed our intereſts.—You will not therefore be ſurpriſed that every one here begins to obſerve that oppoſition is your darling object; that it is not at the meaſures, but at the Miniſter, your attacks are levelled.

I wiſh not, Sir, to be conſidered in the light of a mere individual throughout this Addreſs: I ſpeak the ſentiments of this county, if not of every trading town in the kingdom. I am ſorry to ſay, your determined purpoſe to

reject

reject our favourite Treaty has not been confined within the walls of Parliament :—Pamphlets have been circulated with no common induſtry, in order to inſtruct us in our particular buſineſs, and to inflame the paſſions of thoſe, who have no intereſt in the ſucceſs or rejection of this Treaty.

Among other treatiſes, which have been ſent us on this ſubject, I obſerve one, intituled, " *A* " *Compleat Inveſtigation of Mr.*

" *Eden's Treaty :*" a production conceived in faction, and proſecuted with prejudice.

I cannot adduce a ſtronger inſtance of the intentions of its author, or a more powerful ſupport in favour of the preſent Treaty, than by borrowing his own argument: We are not, he ſays, to open a trade with France at this time, becauſe a treaty failed in 1713.

I will not ſuppoſe the author capable

capable of entertaining ſo contemptible an opinion of his readers, as to imagine them inadequate to the diſtinction between thoſe times and the preſent.

If I am to regard him as acquainted with the relative ſituation of the then commercial intereſts of the two countries, his intentions have been groſsly to miſlead us: If he is ſo uninformed, I muſt tell him, that the very cauſe of the treaty's failing at

that

that time, is an indiſputable proof of the expediency of adopting a Treaty, which has been framed in concert with the manufacturers themſelves. Need I mention the complete change this country has undergone in every branch of manufactures, commerce, and navigation, during the laſt hundred years? Need I mention the infant ſtate of our manufactures, and the acknowledged ſuperiority of thoſe of France, during the laſt century?

We

We have now before us a quite different proſpect; our manufactures are reared to maturity, and brought to a degree of perfection, that dreads no competition.

It is not my intention, Sir, to intrench myſelf in figures, or to ſupport my opinions by minute calculations, or tedious detail. I will even view the ſubject in your own favourite light: —Let me aſk you what advantages we are to gain by alarming

ing the apprehenſions, and exciting the jealouſies of our countrymen? I will even appeal to you, and ſubmit to your deciſion, whether war has not invariably obſtructed our induſtry and commerce: whether peace has not given energy to both:—whether conqueſt ever yielded any thing but additional taxes and accumulating debts.

I may be biaſſed by my own employments, and my own intereſts;

tereſts; but I cannot refrain from ſubmitting to your calmer reflection, whether the encouragement of induſtry, the extenſion of trade and navigation, by opening new markets, be not the moſt effectual mode to render us capable of repelling the inſults even of the moſt formidable powers. By thus improving the opportunities of peace, we ſhall be the better able to ſuſtain the calamities of war.

The American war (if you will allow me to quote it) is a proof of the juſtice of the ſentiments I am anxious to impreſs on your mind. A great aſſociation of powers attempted to annihilate the commerce, and to depreſs the faculties of this country:—But, how much ſoever thoſe powers were aided by the miſmanagement of the miniſter, and the violence of party, three years of peace, aſſiſted by ſalutary regulations, and owing

owing to the ſkill, the induſtry, and the enterprizes of individuals, have brightened the gloomieſt proſpect that ever preſented itſelf to a deſponding people.

Before I take leave of you, allow me to apologize for this interruption: I dare not preſume to expect that the plain ſtile of a mercantile man can be poſſeſſed of any very attractive qualities;—but, as I write at the inſtigation

of my beſt neighbours, and my brother manufacturers, I truſt that this freedom will in a great degree plead its own excuſe.

At this time, perhaps, Mr. Fox could diſpenſe with the opinions even of a commercial man; yet the time has been, and very lately too, when he did not conſider himſelf degraded, or his time miſ-applied, in liſtening to our ſuggeſtions, however inconſiderable; need I ſay,

I ſay, too, that the time has alſo been, when it was the pride of Mr. Fox to ſpeak the ſentiments of

A BRITISH MANUFACTURER.

Mancheſter,
5th Feb. 1787.

G.R.
III.